

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 EUR-08 IO-06 EA-06
DODE-00 PM-03 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 MC-01
IGA-01 EB-04 L-01 SP-02 /068 W
-----311241Z 003321 /50

R 311100Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4504

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KHARTOUM 1813

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, PINS, SU

SUBJECT: SUDANESE MILITARY REQUIREMENTS

SUMMARY: SUDANESE LEADERS FEEL INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE
TO AIR ATTACK. COUNTRY'S ENEMIES, ETHIOPIA AND LIBYA,
HAVE SUPERIOR ATTACK CAPABILITY AND HAVE SIGNIFICANT
SOVIET SUPPORT. THEREFORE, SUDANGOV WOULD LIKE
PURCHASE US AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT INCLUDING F-5 INTER-
CEPTORS, HAWK SURFACE-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS AND RADAR.
REQUESTS TO DO SO LIKELY TO BE PRESENTED IN NEAR
FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

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1. IN RECENT MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT NIMEIRI,
DURING VISIT AMBASSADOR YOUNG, AND SEPARATELY MAY 30
WITH MINDEF BESHIR MOHAMAD ALI, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD
BY SUDANESE LEADERS OF THEIR MILITARY REQUIREMENTS
IN LIGHT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. THEY SEE THEIR DEFENSE
CAPABILITIES GREATLY STRAINED BY DE FACTO ALLIANCE

AMONG USSR, LIBYA, ETHIOPIA AND ANTI-REGIME SUDANESE OUTSIDE COUNTRY. VAST SIZE OF COUNTRY AT ONCE OFFERS SOME MEASURE OF PROTECTION, BUT ALSO SEVERELY TAXES SUDANGOV'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES. MOREOVER, MINDEF TOLD ME, SUDAN CANNOT COUNT ON SOVIETS FOR ANY MORE HELP AND SOVIET EQUIPMENT EXPECTED BE COMPLETELY VALUELESS WITHIN TWO YEARS.

2. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS AIR THREAT FROM ETHIOPIA. MINDEF SAID HE DOUBTED ETHIOPIANS WOULD ATTACK ON LAND, BUT HE DOES FEAR AIR ATTACK. HE NOTED, AS DID NIMEIRI, THAT PORT SUDAN (PORT, OIL REFINERY) AND THREE DAMS ALONG ETHIOPIAN FRONTIER (ROSSEIRES, SENNAR, KHASHM EL-GHERBA) WHICH PROVIDE POWER FOR KHARTOUM AND MUCH OF COUNTRY AND WITHOUT WHICH SEVERAL LARGE AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS IN SUDAN COULD NOT EXIST, ARE HIGHLY VULNERABLE TO ETHIOPIAN ATTACK. SIMILARLY, KHARTOUM ITSELF IS WITHIN RANGE LIBYAN BOMBERS. IN ADDITION, NIMEIRI NOTED LACK OF RADARS HAS ALLOWED SUDANESE ENEMIES TO OVERFLY SOUTHERN SUDAN WITH IMPUNITY.

3. THUS, SUDANGOV FEELS URGENT NEED IMPROVE ITS AIR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. NIMEIRI SPOKE IN GENERALITIES, BUT I ASKED MINDEF TO SPECIFY WHAT HE MEANT. HE LISTED INTERCEPTORS, I.E., F-5S, EARLY WARNING RADARS BOTH HIGH AND LOW DETECTION AND SAMS AND ASSOCIATED RADAR. HE INDICATED SUDANGOV WOULD LIKE HAWK SYSTEM AND INTERESTING TO
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NOTE MINDEF CONFIRMED RECENT VISIT HERE OF SAUDI HAWK OFFICERS. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WAS INTERESTED IN FRENCH CROTALE BUT HE AVOIDED DIRECT ANSWER. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION RE CHINESE ARMS, MINDEF SAID SUDANGOV WILL BE SEEKING INFANTRY AND SIMILAR EQUIPMENT. MINDEF STRESSED SUDANGOV INTERESTED ONLY IN IMPROVING ITS DEFENSES AND NOT RPT NOT AT ALL INTERESTED IN OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KHARTOUM 1813

LIMDIS

4. MINDEF ACKNOWLEDGED FINANCING SUCH MAJOR
MILITARY PURCHASES WOULD BE DIFFICULT. THOUGH
SAUDIS WILLING PROVIDE AT LEAST SOME ASSISTANCE, HE
NOTED THAT SUDANSE WERE REQUIRED GO THROUGH GREAT
EFFORT TO SECURE SAUDI FINANCING. HE SAID DEFENSE
NOW HAD HIGHEST PRIORITY IN NATIONAL BUDGET.

5. COMMENT: SUDANGOV'S ASSESSMENT OF THREAT AND WHAT
IS NEEDED TO MEET IT ARE NOT UNREASONABLE. BELIEVE
IT TRUE THAT BOTH LIBYA AND ETHIOPIA HAVE SUPERIOR
AIR CAPABILITIES, AND WHILE SUDAN IS IN SOME FORM
OF LIMBO IN TERMS OF MILITARY SUPPLIES, ITS CHIEF
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ENEMIES ARE GORGING ON SOVIET EQUIPMENT, NOT TO
MENTION WHAT IS OR HAS BEEN AVAILABLE FROM OTHER
SOURCES. SUDANGOV WOULD LIKE DIVERSIFY ITS SOURCES
MILITARY EQUIPMENT, AND EUROPEANS AND CHINESE HAVE
AND PROBABLY WILL SELL SOME ITEMS. HOWEVER, AS
FRENCH CHARGE PHRASED IT, QTE WE ARE NOT GIVING
ANYTHING AWAY UNQUOTE.

6. WE HAVE BRIEFED KEY OFFICIALS HERE ON NEW US
ARMS SALES POLICY AND HAVE OUTLINED SPECIFIC POLICIES

RE SUDAN. RECENT REMARKS BY DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN THAT WE WOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER SUDANESE MILITARY REQUESTS HAVE BEEN NOTED BY OFFICIALS AND PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PRESS. SUDANESE LEADERS ARE NOT RPT NOT UNAWARE OF NEW ATTITUDES IN US TOWARD ARMS SALES. HOWEVER, THEIR PRINCIPAL PRESENT CONCERN IS WHAT FOR THEM IS A VERY SERIOUS THREAT WHICH THEY ARE NOT AT ALL WELL PREPARED TO MEET. THEY ARE NOT SURE THEY FULLY UNDERSTAND HOW WE SHALL RESPOND TO THEIR REQUESTS BUT THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO COME FORWARD SOONER RATHER THAN LATER WITH THEM. MOREOVER, IT UNLIKELY THEY WILL REFRAIN FROM ASKING FOR SUCH POTENTIALLY CONTROVERSIAL ITEMS AS F-5S OR HAWK MISSILES EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD BE MORE COMFORTABLE FOR US IF THEY DID NOT ASK FOR THEM. AS I LEFT MINDEF'S OFFICE, HE SAID QTE OUR LIST IS READY AND WE SHALL BE SENDING IT TO YOU. UNQUOTE.

7. BECAUSE FELT NEED IS SO URGENT AND PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT TO SUDANGOV AND YET IS POTENTIALLY SO CONTROVERSIAL FOR US, ARMS SALES ISSUE LIKELY TO REMAIN FOR SOME TIME SINGLE MOST DELICATE ASPECT OUR OTHERWISE QUOTE GOOD RELATIONS WITH SUDAN. BOGOSIAN

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